

***Clientelism and the Potential Uses of Group  
Biography: The Case of the Family Godó and the  
Founding of "La Vanguardia"***

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***Biography as a Problem: New Perspectives***

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## **INTRODUCTION**

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, biography seems to be in fashion more than ever among scholars, as the wide recognition enjoyed by the expression "biographical turn" seems to confirm. Nevertheless, the fact that those currently writing about the relationship between history and biography still refer to the latter with harsh expressions such as "profession's unloved stepchild" or "the bastard child of the Academe" not only tells us about current tendencies among scholars—and their somehow disturbing passion for drawing family metaphors— but reminds us, above all, of the low esteem with which biography was generally (though not exclusively) perceived among historians throughout the twentieth century.<sup>1</sup>

Fortunately, the deep transformation that took place in the scientific field by the 1970's and the questioning of prevailing paradigms that it implied also favoured a reconsideration of the main limitations that scholars had repeatedly attributed to the genre of biography—namely the notions of *representativity*, *agency*, the *internal unity of the subject* and the *narrative* form. In my view, the greatest innovation represented by this "biographical turn"—still evolving to this very day— has not only been the new fields that the use of biography as a heuristic tool has opened for the work of historians; but primarily the importance of getting rid of the persistent *stigmatization* that biography has traditionally carried in the academic world. In other words, I think that the most far reaching consequence of the "biographical turn" has been its vindication of biography as a valid and self-sufficient discipline in the study of the past.

Even if one might wonder to what extent this stigmatization had much to do with the general public or was rather a particular feature of the academic *milieu*—since biographies have always enjoyed a great audience among the public—the truth is that the "biographical turn" has also favoured another way of approaching the study of lives, that is the study of *group biography*.

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<sup>1</sup> The little importance that predominant historiographical traditions throughout the 20th century attributed to biography—whether they were called positivism, Marxism or the *Annales* school— had also an impact on academic literature. According to François Dosse, biographical contents only represented between 0% and 0,7% of the total output of academic journals in the period between 1929 and 1976. It is surprising as well that the first journal devoted to the genre—" *Biography: An Interdisciplinary Quarterly*"—was not founded apparently until 1978. See: DOSSE, F. (2007), *Le pari biographique: écrire une vie*, Paris, 2005; NASAW, D., "Introduction", in *The American Historical Review*, vol. 114, n. 3, p. 547-572; WEINBERG, S. (2008), "Biography, the Bastard Child of Academe", *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (May 9, 2008), p. 1-5.

The principal aim of this paper is to offer a general description of the possibilities and limitations of what has been generally referred to as "*group biography*". Far from being a new genre, group biography has benefited nevertheless from the renewed interest that scholars are currently showing in the great potential that biography may have in our study of the past. In order to explore the above-mentioned possibilities and limitations of group biography, this paper will be structured in two main parts.

The first one will be devoted to briefly contextualizing *group biography* within the broader category of *collective biography*, a label that embodies any biographical study that deals with more than one subject. Thus, in that part we shall provide a quick insight into other forms of collective biography —particularly *comparative biography* and *prosopography*— in order to see the differences —as well as similarities— that these notions present in relation with *group biography*.

In the second part a case-study will be taken as an example of the potential uses of *group biography*. The case-study chosen will be that of the Godó family—a dynasty of 19th century Catalan industrialists, politicians and journalists— with the aim of exploring the strategies implemented by the different members of this family in order to create, manage and preserve their patrimony and reproduce their social status within Restoration Spain (1874-1923).

Within this historical framework, I will argue that despite the great contribution that prosopographical studies have represented in our understanding of Spanish Restoration elites, their main concentration on pre-established categories —such as professional profile or incomes— on the grounds of *representativity* has let to an underestimation of individual agency. In contrast, in this paper I shall argue in favour of a return to qualitative analysis, based on a reduction of scale (micro-analysis) that takes *historical agency* and *connections* between individuals, rather than pre-established categories, as its main concerns when it comes to define *social groups*.

In that sense, family and parenthood will be considered here as key elements in the cohesion and social reproduction of elites, not only in terms of biological and material conditions, but also in terms of social and symbolic capital.

Finally, the aim of this paper is not to provide a deeply detailed account of my research but rather to give some hints on how I plan to conduct it in order to facilitate feedback from both professors and colleagues. Consequently, and for reasons of space economy, footnotes and literature will only be used when they help to illustrate my arguments.

### ***Collective and Group biography***

Despite the great appeal that the life of a single character often has for the general public—often by an innate curiosity of seeing *how it went for others in life* and the need of self-affirmation that probably lies behind it—the greater attention that biography has lately been enjoying among scholars—referred as "the biographical turn"—has not been exclusively circumscribed to the life of single individuals; but has also fostered interest in the life of different characters with common features—whether these features are expressed in terms of historical context, group membership or any type of personal link (such as blood ties, parenthood, or even friendship, to mention some).

In fact, while the writing of biography is usually based on the existence of a single character, collective biography has offered innovative and useful approaches by combining the study of different subjects. The greatest virtue of collective biography is that it helps to lessen the artificial isolation of the subject that every biography implies to some extent by studying a certain kind of link that exists between a group of people. Indeed, one of the main traps that one can fall into when writing a biography is that the powerful stimulus represented by the subject studied—his or her alleged qualities or rich life, for instance—may lead the author to portray an individual as completely disconnected from the society and historical context in which he or she lived, unless the aim of the author is precisely to prompt a reduced scale of observation, as happens with microhistory.

This point leads us to the question of the blurred differences between biography and microhistory. Although that is not the main concern of this paper, we might suggest here a potential difference between these two practices: while the microhistorian *tends* to focus on the lives of ordinary people (or towns, etc.) with the aim of demonstrating that this "ordinariness" can precisely tell us, through a "thick description", a great deal about a specific historical context (such as a *mentalité* or a culture), the work of the biographer, on the contrary, *does not necessarily* aim to uncover a specific element of a historical period, but can simply focus on the life of an individual for its own distinctive component—its "*petit X*", to use Sabina Loriga's expression—that makes him or her (no matter if ordinary or eminent) worth valuable; and therefore, the potential subject of a biography.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> This alleged difference would disappear with the case of "contextual biography", where the goal of the author is explicitly to evoke a specific period. LEVI, G. (1989), *Les usages de la biographie*, *Annales ESC*, n° 6, November-December, pp. 1325-1336; S. LORIGA, S. (1996), *Le petit X: de la biographie à l'histoire*, Paris, Seuil; and specially LEPORE, J. (2001), *Historians who love too much: reflections on microhistory and biography*, *The Journal of American History*, June 2001, pp. 129-144.

One of the major goals of collective biography is precisely to break the alleged artificial isolation of the subject in biography by combining its study with that of other subjects. Consequently, the use of collective biography implies an understanding of the individual as part of a collective, no matter what the nature of this collective is. Individual characters are not studied *per se*, but are rather chosen so that the combining of their lives might provide a new insight that otherwise would be impossible to reveal if studied alone.<sup>3</sup>

Therefore the key point in collective biography is the kind of link that the historian establishes between the different subjects, whether this link is manifest and clear (as it would be in the case of brothers, siblings or married couples, for instance); or whether it is artificially established by the historian with a specific purpose (in the case of subjects that never knew each other, for example). The number of possibilities available is thus immense, and explains why collective biography is such a functional heuristic tool for the work of historians.

However, the broad definition that the expression *collective biography* embodies can be considered at the same time one of the main reasons of why so little has been written about it. The shallow characterization of the term has led historians to use it very often without further recognition. In other cases, they have directly focused on a specific form of writing collective history that is very well known. In that sense, we might wonder to what extent collective biography is a way of writing biography—or rather a label created by (some) historians in order to assemble different possibilities of writing biographies based on more than one single character under the same expression.<sup>4</sup>

A good reason to support this argument is that while little has been written about *collective biography* as a concept, its most conspicuous representatives are widely acknowledged through a solid tradition and a myriad of works: that is particularly the case of *comparative biography*, *prosopography* and, to a lesser extent, *group biography*.

Far from new, *comparative biography* counts a substantial legacy, since the classic work of Plutarch's *Parallel lives* was already based on the comparison and contrast between

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<sup>3</sup> Even when collective biography is used with the aim of illustrating the life of a single character.

<sup>4</sup> An example of such confusion around the notion of "collective history" is that the few authors that have explicitly dealt with it have often started by defining what do they personally understand by collective biography. See: CAINE, B. (2010), *Biography and history*. Palgrave-Macmillan, pp. 47-65; and THOMAS, K. (2005), *Changing Conceptions of National Biography: the Oxford DNB in Historical Perspective*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Greek and Roman rulers.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, comparative biography offers a valuable possibility of overcoming the mentioned isolation of biographies by taking into account at least two different subjects. In fact, this approach provides an appealing difference compared to other forms of collective studies: the connection between the different characters involved does not need to be *explicit* but can also be built on a different basis. The clearest one is the coincidence in time between subjects (*context*), as would be the case of Allan Bullock's book on Hitler and Stalin; but it can also engage characters that did not necessarily know each other or even lived in different historic periods, as would be—to follow with Hitler's example—the comparative study by Desmond Seward between Napoleon and the German dictator.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, comparative biography allows us not only to explore the similarities and differences between characters but it can also shed new light on characters who have already been widely studied. The famous comparison of J.H. Elliott between Richelieu and Olivares, two statesmen who had traditionally received very different treatment by historians despite being equally powerful contemporaries, would be a suitable example here.<sup>7</sup> In fact, this can be considered one of the major advantages of comparative biography: it enables us to study contemporary subjects by explaining their different individual trajectories. Therefore, by using this dual dimension—same context, different destinies—comparison can help us to understand the consequences that certain decisions had in specific historical periods.

In the case of *Prosopography*, it has been in use since the 1960s and is probably still the most popular way of writing collective biography. In his old but still quoted article on the topic, Lawrence Stone defined *prosopography* "as the investigation of the common background characteristics of a group of actors in history by means of a collective story of

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<sup>5</sup> No surprise why comparative biography has also been referred as "*parallel lives*". Another interesting possibility—even if we won't refer to it here—is the entangling of different lives, known as "*biographies croisées*". For this last case, see for instance: VERGER, J. (1985), *Un essai de biographies croisées (Saint Bernard/Abélard) et ses enseignements*, in *Problèmes et méthodes de la Biographie*, Actes du Colloque, May 1985, pp. 79-85.

<sup>6</sup> BULLOCK, A. (1991), *Hitler and Stalin: Parallel Lives*, London, Harper Collins; SEWARD, D. (1989), *Napoleon and Hitler. A Comparative Biography*, Viking.

<sup>7</sup> Thus, while Cardinal Richelieu had attracted extensive biographical attention, including not only two biographies but also works on his ideas and policies, studies on the institutions through which he governed France and also the publication of his papers; the case of the Duke of Olivares was, at least during Elliot's current research, a character that had received little attention, apparently because the ill-fated career of the duke made him a less appealing subject for historians. ELLIOT, J. H. (1984), *Richelieu and Olivares*, New York, Cambridge University Press.

*their lives*".<sup>8</sup> The method is thus based on framing a particular space and then setting a group of questions —social origins, political affiliation, economic position, etc.— to be addressed. The different types of information obtained from the subjects studied are later compared in order to establish similarities and differences, with the aim of delineating specific forms of action. This interest in representative social behaviour explains why prosopography has also been referred to as "*modal biography*" or "*social quantitative history*".<sup>9</sup> Indeed, its major concern with general patterns of behaviour means that individual biographies are interesting as long as they reflect those characteristics that are considered to be representative of a certain class or group. Consequently, prosopography has been particularly valuable for the study of specific groups, such as parliamentaries.<sup>10</sup>

Last but not least, **group biography** is also a form of collective biography, intensively practiced also, but probably with less conceptualization lying behind it. Again, a connection among individuals is established in the case of group biography too; but instead of being the heuristic tool that allows us to put individuals in contrast or to use these connections to encompass a number of individuals under specific *criteria*, the aim of group biography is, above all, to take such connections as its main point of concern. Thus, for example, the goal of group biography is not to explain the most persistent (or representative) features among Spanish parliamentarians in Restoration Spain and see how many of them shared a specific social background, studied in the same place or frequented the same spaces of sociability; but rather to take as its main concern *how* these personal relationships within the family influenced the character of an individual, how these friendships that originated at university represent an intellectual stimulus for him, or how these acquaintances established in a club prove crucial for him in obtaining public office. Therefore, the bond between the individual and others is not the simple background of a biography nor a social categorization. Rather the nature and consequences of such bonds, even if unacknowledged or anachronistic, turns out to be the main point of concern for the historian.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> STONE, L. (1971), *Prosopography, Daedalus*, 100, nº 1, p. 46-71.

<sup>9</sup> LEVI, G. (1989), *Op. Cit.*, p. 1329.

<sup>10</sup> See: BEST, H. & COTTA, M., eds. (2000), *Parliamentary Representatives in Europe 1848-2000: Legislative Recruitment and Careers in Eleven European Countries*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

<sup>11</sup> Thus, the study of politicians that *shared* an intellectual tradition of progressive ideas can also be regarded as group biography, even when they lived in different moments. That is the case of the two following works: BURDIEL, I. & PÉREZ LEDESMA, M., coords. (2000), *Liberales, agitadores y conspiradores. Biografías heterodoxas del siglo XIX*, Madrid, Espasa; and J. MORENO LUZÓN, ed. (2006) *Progresistas. Biografías de reformistas españoles (1808-1939)*, Madrid, Taurus-Fundación Pablo Iglesias.

Consequently, a clear limitation that the use of group biography traditionally implies—and will certainly be so in our case—is that the attention on the *connections* between individuals inevitably produces a shallower description of the characters studied. In other words, the collective dimension of group biography makes it impossible for the author to proceed with the kind of "think description" that is possible to offer in the case of single biographies.

Bearing that in mind, the emphasis of group biography on bonds, links and connections explains why does it combine particularly well with *network analysis*. The individuals of a group biography are not passive members of a collective or a organization according to their specific features, but are rather seen as actors that interact and negotiate with other members of such collective or organization through friendship, parenthood or any type of specific affinity (such as political or linguistic). The notion of *social capital*—that we could define as "an investment in social relations with expected returns"—is exceptionally valuable here, since it allows us to study the role of the different subjects of our biography and their respective historical *agency*.

The different types of expected returns that these characters negotiate between each other—such as information, influence, social credentials or reinforcement—might help us to explore the kind of relation they held between each other—or, to use the vocabulary previously employed, the kind of link or connection that existed between them. Such forms of capital are not exclusively circumscribed to single individuals, but can also be the result of a group that behaves through collective assets, thus increasing the opportunities of each individual that integrates the group. The clearest example of such group endeavour is the family, the primary element in the socialization of the individual. It is to the family and its role in social and cultural reproduction that we will now turn our attention through our case of study—that is the case of the Godó family.



### ***The case of the Godó: historical framework***

Between 1870 and 1914, the Mediterranean area experienced a developmental dynamic of its own, characterized by the consolidation of a new liberal state model, the emergence of new parliamentary regimes (Third French Republic, Borbonic Restoration in Spain) and substantial changes in other ones (such the case of Italy and the "parliamentary revolution" that led the *Sinistra* into power for the first time, in 1876).

Despite the particularities of each country, these regimes underwent a progressive but complex process of democratization in which the exercise of "politics without democracy" became a common practice. Especially in Italy and Spain, the fear of the leading groups at the opening of the democratic process led to a strong restriction of suffrage and the establishment of mechanisms ("sistema del turno" in Spain and "transformismo" in Italy) that altered the democratic game. Thanks to this, political power remained concentrated in the hands of the two major conservative liberal parties (the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party in Spain, the *Destra* and the *Sinistra* in Italy) and marginalized the vast majority of the population. Even in France, where universal suffrage had been introduced with the new constitution in 1875, the system was structured as a network of client-led national oligarchies.<sup>12</sup>

This research aims to focus on the role played by the local oligarchies as a link between the liberal parties and the territory, often as representatives of central decisions. In many cases, these oligarchies founded newspapers that, beyond acting as media, were intended to spread the ideology of the party and the positioning of it in certain matters (state model, economic policy, restriction or expansion of freedoms, etc.). In a period marked by the formation of the administrative system of individual nation states in Europe, urbanization and the emergence of mass society and public opinion, the appearance of the press as a new mass media and builder of opinion represented one of the main mechanisms used by politicians (and their detractors too) to legitimize the political system.

To do this, we intend to study the case of the family Godó, the Liberal Party representatives in the cities of Igualada and Barcelona during the political phase of the Spanish Restoration (1874-1923) and founders of *La Vanguardia* (1881), one of today's leading Spanish newspapers.

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<sup>12</sup> Not surprisingly, it was during this period that the first "committees" appeared in France as a form of intervention in parliamentarism by the economic elites, or the phenomenon of "lobbying", as a practice of owner's organisations to condition political life.

### ***The Godó family***

So, who were the Godó's?

The name Godó has traditionally been (and still is) associated with the family that founded one of today's oldest and most widely distributed Spanish newspapers, *La Vanguardia*. In fact, in 1881 two members of the family Godó, Carles (Igalada, 1834-Teià, 1897) and Bartomeu Godó Pié (Igalada, 1837-Barcelona, 1894) founded *La Vanguardia* in Barcelona as Práxedes Mateo Sagasta's Liberal Party (*Partido Liberal*) mouthpiece in the city under Restoration Spain (1874-1923).

Accounts of the family Godó, basically provided by official biographers, such as Vis Molina and Pere Voltes, have traditionally focused on the two above mentioned brothers who founded *La Vanguardia*, Carles and Bartomeu, and the successive members that lived in Barcelona and became directors of the same newspaper. However, these works have often been influenced by contemporary myths that surround *La Vanguardia* as it is today, to the point of providing a notably biased explanation —of both the family and the newspaper— that make them, in my opinion, simple hagiographies of the present owners.

Nevertheless, our main point of concern here is that these works have completely neglected those other members of the family that did not live in Barcelona —particularly those who remained in the native city of the Godó's, Igalada— and the close relations they maintained with Carles and Bartomeu and their respective heirs. As we shall see, the tight bonds between those members living in Barcelona and those living in Igalada became a crucial element in the global strategies implemented by the family to preserve and enlarge a substantial patrimony spread among different cities and to reproduce their social status under Restoration Spain (1874-1923).

Indeed, the origins of the family Godó go back to 18th century Igalada, an industrial city at the centre of Catalonia. Favoured by the great expansion of cotton manufacture in the 18th century, Igalada reached the 14,000 inhabitants by the 1850's and became the second most important textile city in Catalonia, only surpassed by Barcelona. The family Godó, who had settled in Igalada by the end of the 18th century —the first member being the weaver Ramon Godó Mas (1738-1813)— attracted by the economic development of the city, became involved in following generations with the foundation of different industrial establishments. The main one (though not the only one) would be *La Igaladina Cotonera*, a textile factory propelled by a steam engine that was founded in 1841 by an association of

traders and industrialists, among whom there were Ramon Godó Lluçia (1801-1865) and a relative, Oleguer Godó (?).<sup>13</sup>

By the second half of the 19th century, the economic dominance of the Godó clan, which had some of its members among the major contributors of the city, was soon accompanied by a leading role in Iguialada's associative and political life. Indeed, from the establishment of the regime of the Restoration in Spain in 1874, the Godó's became the representatives of Sagasta's Liberal Party in Iguialada and the main opposition to another family of cotton manufacturers, the Boyer, representatives of the Cánovas del Castillo Conservative Party, the other major Spanish political party. Thus, in the last third of the nineteenth century Iguialada's political life soon became known as a genuine cacique manor of the group known as "Godonists", who controlled the office of mayor, deputy and provincial deputy at Court for an almost uninterrupted twenty-five year period.

Meanwhile, and following a serious crisis in Iguialada's textile industry, provoked by the lack of water resources and railway connections to the city, two sons of the afore mentioned Ramon Godó Lluçia, Bartolomé and Carlos Godó Pié, emigrated in the 1860's to Bilbao and Oviedo; while their oldest brother, Ramon Godó Pié, remained in Iguialada and inherited the family business.

By the 1870's the two brothers would move to Barcelona, thus spreading the family patronage networks and political influence. In fact, it was in Barcelona, that Carles and Bartomeu continued the political activities of the family, particularly in Barcelona's city hall, and founded the newspaper *La Vanguardia* in 1881 as Sagasta's party mouthpiece in the city. Despite living in Barcelona, both Carles and Bartomeu also became elected provincial deputies on different occasions for the district of Iguialada, thanks to the control that their brother (and heir of the family), Ramon Godó Pié, held in the city.

In the following two decades, and despite initial difficulties, the political newspaper of the Godó brothers went through a series of drastic changes in terms of content, quality and political orientation. This gradually transformed what had appeared as the petty newspaper of a political faction in Barcelona into a widely read newspaper—to the point that by the end of the First World War and selling around 100,000 copies a day, it had become the most widely distributed newspaper in Barcelona and one of the first in Spain in terms of circulation.

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<sup>13</sup> About two decades later, in 1881, the son of Ramon Godó Lluçia—Ramon Godó Pié (1825-1883)—obtained the total ownership of *La Iguialadina Cotonera*. Until 1967, this factory remained in the hands of his future heirs.

### ***Group biography and the cultural dimension of Clientelism: the case of the Godó family***

By focusing on the case of the different members of the Godó family, the aim of this thesis is to propose an alternative interpretation to conventional accounts of Restoration Spain' elites by giving special attention to the cultural dimension of clientelism.

While the first classic accounts of clientelism, which appeared primarily in the 1950's and 1960's, depicted it as the political translation of a set of economic and social inequalities that were allegedly distinctive features of backward capitalist societies, in the case of the historical materialism; or depicted it as an essentially political and electoral control exerted by certain "political friends" (*amigos políticos*), in the case of the functionalist conception which appeared in the 1970's; these perspectives had been enriched by the end of the 1980's and the beginning of the 1990's with the implementation of new methodologies. That was particularly the case in the history of the elites<sup>14</sup>, and prosopographical studies put into practice from a regional point of view; two methodologies that despite having a long tradition in other historiographies, gave (and are still giving) fruitful results in the study of Restoration Spain.<sup>15</sup> As a result, our vocabulary referring to those who held political and economical power in a specific society (*elites*) has become more accurate (even when the conceptual limitations that the term "elite" still possesses are clear, they are often overlooked in order to avoid other expressions, such as *bourgeoisie*, *ruling class* or *oligarchy*).<sup>16</sup> In addition, prosopographical studies have provided new empirical information about Restoration elites, depicting a social group that is much more plural than had previously been thought: historians do not talk anymore of a "bloque de poder"—understanding by this a closed group that would monopolize both the economic and political power—but rather about a much more plural and diffused notion of "elites". Other

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<sup>14</sup> See some examples —on a much vaster literature— in: GORTÁZAR, G. (1990), Investigar las élites: Nuevas perspectivas, in *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma, Serie V, Hª Contemporánea*, t. 3, pp. 15-24;. Particularly valuable are the state of the art in the historiography of elites provided, in the case of Italy by Renato Camurri, and Javier Moreno Luzón for the case of Spain, in ZURITA, R. & CAMURRI, R., eds. (2008), *Las elites en Italia y en España (1850-1922)*, València, Publicacions de la Universitat de València.

<sup>15</sup> Again, without a pretension of exhaustivity, some of the most representatives works of this method are: CARASA, P. (1997), *Elites castellanas de la Restauración. Una aproximación al poder político en Castilla*, Valladolid, Junta de Castilla y León, Consejería de Educación y Cultura, 2 vol.; DD.AA. (2010), Análisis prosopográfico de los parlamentarios electos de los distritos de Vasconia en tiempos de restauración monárquica (1876-1890), in *Historia Constitucional, Revista Electrónica de Historia Constitucional*, nº 11, pp. 199-235.

<sup>16</sup> For such limitations, see: CARASA SOTO, P. (1998), De la burguesía a las elites, entre la ambigüedad y la renovación conceptual, in *Ayer*, nº 42, pp. 213-237; and the observations of J. Moreno Luzón in ZURITA, R. & CAMURRI, R., eds. (2008), *Las elites en Italia y en España...*, pp. 27-42.

methodologies that have been crucial in the field of Restoration elites have been the comparative method, the biography and the use of conceptual vocabulary and theories from social sciences, particularly from political science, sociology and, to a less extent, anthropology.<sup>17</sup> As a consequence, clientelism can hardly be considered any more as a specific feature of Spanish elites nor Mediterranean ones; representing, on the contrary, a set of practices that were also present in many European countries and are still present nowadays in what are considered advanced economies.<sup>18</sup>

In my opinion, an important limitation that can be observed in the mentioned accounts (extremely simplified here) of the specific case of Restoration elites is that their notion of "legitimation" has been too circumscribed to the sociological and prosopographical dimension of power. Thus, whether the aim has been to illustrate what are considered to be the *modal* features of an elite, or the capacity of such elite to create clientelistic networks based on patron-client basis (*influence*), both accounts have completely overlooked the symbolic legitimation that is, in my view, a crucial element behind the power of those elites.

In fact, the pre-eminence of the elites was not only obtained through material sources, but was also the result of a (certain) recognition from the rest of the population, based on the accumulation by those elites of social and cultural capital. Thus, the capacity of the local *cacique* to construct an image of himself as the representative and defender of local interests, his prestige or his attachment to the locality, were notions that reinforced his power and acted as sources of legitimation.

In that sense, I intend to argue against the rather persistent theories of modernization —still considerably active among Spanish scholars— that give a picture of clientelism as an old way of doing politics before the emergence of mass politics and (an alleged) *true* democratization. Such theories not only approach the study of clientelism from a presentist perspective, according to which any divergences from current concepts of *representativity*, *citizenship* or *democracy* are seen as anomalies in the historical

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<sup>17</sup> Despite attracting growing attention, in Spain biography has not developed so much as it has had in other historiographies. Nevertheless, we can count on excellent exceptions: MORENO LUZÓN, J. (1998), *Romanones: caciquismo y política liberal*, Madrid, Alianza editorial; or BURDIEL, I. (2010), *Isabel II. Una biografía (1830-1904)*, Madrid, Taurus.

<sup>18</sup> See: RONIGER, L. & GÜNES-AYATA, A., eds. (1994), *Democracy, Clientelism, and Civil Society*, London, Lynne Rienner; KAWATA, J. ed. (2006), *Comparing Political Corruption and Clientelism*, Hampshire, Ashgate; and PIATTONI, S. (2001), *Clientelism, Interests, and Democratic Representation. The European Experience in Historical and Comparative Perspective*, Cambridge University Press.

development— but also are embodied of the *regenerationist* ("regeneracionismo") critique and their critique of clientelism on moral grounds.

On the contrary, our intention in this study is to move beyond the gloomy legacy that still surrounds the notion of the *caciquismo*; and explore those potential sources of legitimacy or public recognition that elites obtained from the local community outside the political arena and the elections, even when they were certainly used and manipulated for political ends.

Thus, a wealthy position was certainly indispensable to run for office in Restoration Spain (since candidates had to pay the expenses of elections with their own money), but the public legitimacy that the elites could not obtain from the elections, since they were a complete fiction, would rather have been obtained (or cultivated) by their intensive investment in social relations (social capital) and different forms of prestige and image (cultural capital). The potential benefits to be obtained would be particularly valuable in local communities when they were accumulated and transmitted from one generation to the other. In that sense, the family can be considered the best example of a unit where strategies are implemented from a *group perspective*.

Consequently, our research does not seek to provide either a quantitative account of the elites for the sake of representativeness nor a simple description of electoral results based on a sociological perspective; but rather to reduce our field of study to a micro analytical perspective based on group biography. Family and parenthood will be examined as key elements in the concentration and monopolization of power in all its diverse forms—economical, political but also cultural—. <sup>19</sup>

Therefore, when we explore the different strategies that the family Godó put into practice in order to create, manage and preserve their patrimony and reproduce their social status, the symbolic or cultural notion of power will be central. Indeed, one of the main questions in our research will be to determine how the persistent presence of the same surname in the local area (Igalada) through different generations, and the potential connotations that were associated to it in the public sphere (such as prestige, tradition and proximity; or perhaps corruption and fraud) helped or become an insurmountable impediment for the members of the family that aspired to obtain public support. Thus, when

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<sup>19</sup> It is important to note that Restoration Spain has rarely been approached from the family perspective. Nevertheless, there are some noteworthy exceptions: SIERRA, M. (1992), *La familia Ybarra, empresarios y políticos*, Sevilla, Muñoz Moya y Monraveta; and MUÑOZ LÓPEZ, M. del P. (2001), *Sangre, amor e interés: la familia en la España de la Restauración*, Madrid, Marcial Pons.

the two brothers living in Barcelona, Carles and Bartomeu Godó Pié, ran in elections for the district of Igualada, they were probably not regarded (or not simply) as themselves or as the spokesmen of the Liberal Party; but rather as the representatives of the Godó family and all the accumulated connotations associated with that surname. Nevertheless, such methodology is not exempted from its own perils, as Pierre Bourdieu alerted.<sup>20</sup>

Bearing that in mind, it is not a surprise to find many occasions in which a certain member of the Godó family participated in some activity in order to promote his image and prestige in the local community. Thus, the ruthless defence of protectionist measures in the economy that Bartomeu instigated in the Court's during the 1870's were not only convenient for his own private factories in Barcelona, but could also allow him —through a proper dissemination of information— to present himself in Igualada as the best defender of the local interests against a far and distant power in Madrid.

The clearest example of such kinds of strategies of investment in symbolic capital that also had clear material benefits for the interests of the family was precisely the train connection that Igualada obtained, after repeatedly failed attempts in the past, in 1893. When the factory *La Igualadina Cotonera* was originally built with a steam engine, in 1841, it was because there were high expectations of a coal mine situated in Calaf, a nearby town to Igualada. Not surprisingly, some of the industrialists that were behind *La Igualadina Cotonera* also invested in shares of the above mentioned coal mine. When this prospect finally turned to be a total failure, the great expansion that cotton manufacture had been experiencing in the city was completely stopped by the high costs of obtaining primary sources of energy, to the point that the 14,000 inhabitants that Igualada had in 1857 had fallen to 10,000 by 1887. In addition, such an economic crisis acted as the stimulus for an emigration of wealthy men who left Igualada in the 1860's and moved to other cities of the coast (where the coal arrived from England) or closer to towns with important water resources. Examples of this emigration include the factories established by the Jover i Ortinez or the Vives families close to the river Cardener. Yet the most famous case will be that of those families from Igualada who moved to Barcelona and acquired great renown, like the Muntadas brothers, founders *La España industrial* or the Tous and *La Maquinista*

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<sup>20</sup> Thus, the greatest peril is to present the life story of the protagonist in a clear chronological order or internal unity, in which all the events seem to direct the central character to the final destiny he is unmistakably fated to achieve. The French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu called this false impression "the biographical illusion". BOURDIEU, P. (1986), L'illusion biographique, in *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, vol. 62-63, june 1986, p. 69-72.

*Terrestre y Marítima*, two of the biggest Spanish factories at the time; or, to take a newer example, that of Carles and Bartomeu Godó Pié.

In any case, all the historians that have worked in the economic history of Igualada, such as Pere Pascual or Josep Maria Torres i Ribé, have concurred as to the crucial role that the railway connection obtained in 1893 played in Igualada's economic recovery; and when we examine the administrative accounts of the *Igualadina Cotonera*, the economic benefit obtained turned out to be decisive. The impact that the much fought for arrival of the railway had on Igualada public opinion is certainly difficult to measure, but a quick look at local newspapers shows that the event, and the deputy that apparently obtained it, Carles Godó Pié, appear everywhere.

Therefore, we can consider that family and parenthood act as a particularly valuable unity in controlling power, not only from a *synchronic* perspective (different members of the same family holding diverse public offices at the same time); but also from a *diachronic* point of view, since the surname, memory and tradition acted (for good or for bad) across time and generations. Indeed, the presence of different members of the same family in Igualada, Barcelona and probably some others places—such as Bilbao— might allow us to study a minor topic in the Spanish literature on clientelism: that is, how clientelism operated in urban areas.<sup>21</sup> Additionally, the links of the Godó to such diverse cities imply that notions such as *space* and *transfers* within the family network will play a key role in our research.

Moreover, the case of the Godó dynasty should allow us to implement a *comparative perspective* within the family on the range of strategies of social status that they used in every city; and see communalities and differences in it. Thus, while the family was well known in a rather small city such Igualada, thanks to the long presence through different generations, their economic prominence and the involvement of its members in diverse spaces of sociability (*Cercle Mercantil Industrial i Agrícola*, *Associació de Fabricants*

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<sup>21</sup> Despite some authors such as Gabriele Ranzato, Alicia Yanini, Borja de Riquer already alerted by the end of the 1980's and beginning of the 1990's about the presence of a different form of clientelism in urban areas, our knowledge about how clientelism worked in Barcelona is still very weak, as Pere Anguera stated. In my opinion, that is—in the Catalan case—a consequence of the bigger interest that Catalan historiography has devoted to the emergence of new political forces (such as La Lliga Regionalista, Lleroux's republicanism or the Anarchist movement). Thus, we barely know the trajectory of the dynastic parties in the city. See: RIQUER, Borja de (1990), *Duran i Bas i el conservadorisme dinàstic català de la segona meitat del segle XIX*, introduction in the work of the same author, *Epistolari polític de Manuel Duran i Bas. Correspondència entre 1866 i 1904*, Barcelona, Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, pp. 15-153; ANGUERA, P., *La Restauració a la Catalunya urbana*, in MIR, C. ed. (1989), *Actituds polítiques i control social a la Catalunya de la Restauració (1875-1923)*, Lleida, Virgili i Pagès, Estudi General: Institut d'Estudis Ilerdencs, pp. 17-36.



*de Teixit d'Igualada, Sometent Armat*, etc.); the migration of some members by the 1860's to a much bigger city like Barcelona might have required different strategies in terms of social and cultural capital to build a new family network. In this sense, the role played by the press will be a central point in our study.

Nevertheless, the value of using network analysis from the point of group biography is that it not only serves to understand the advantages of strategies implemented within the family, but also to explore how potential tensions between their members were solved, and their capacity to adapt to changing situations. Particularly in the case of the Catalan inheritance system, where only one member (known popularly as "*l'hereu*", the oldest son) inherited all the family properties, such a mechanism was a persistent source of frustration for those members that were forced to leave the family at a certain age ("*cabalers*"), even when the *hereu* was impelled to find them the best position available. The reasons that lay behind the migration of Carles and Bartomeu Godó Pié might be particularly useful here, since they were born into a family that had seven sons and daughters and only one, the above mentioned Ramon Godó Pié, inherited all the family businesses.

Regarding the capacity of the family to adapt to certain situations, an important point of this thesis will be to investigate whether the decision of Ramon Godó Lallana (1864-1931), the owner of *La Vanguardia* since 1897, to present his newspaper as an officially independent newspaper—thus abandoning the function of mouthpiece of the Liberal Party in Barcelona for which it was originally created—had something to do with the electoral defeat of his cousin in Igualada, Joan Godó Llucà (1851-1935).

In fact, after a short career as deputy for the district of Igualada (certainly benefited by his marriage with a woman from that city, Rosa Valls i Valls), Ramon Godó Lallana, who always lived in Barcelona, gave up his political career in favour of his cousin from Igualada, Joan Godó Llucà. It was precisely in the first elections in which Joan participated, in 1907, that a political change that would be crucial in the future crisis of the Restoration system in Catalonia, and later in Spain, actually took place: the emergence of the unitarian, Catalanist and anti-dynastic coalition of "*Solidaritat Catalana*" (*Catalan solidarity*).

Created in 1906 with the aim of breaking the above mentioned "turno dinástico" between the liberal and the conservative party, "*Solidaritat Catalana*" acted as a platform that gathered together all the parties that were present in Catalonia at the time (Lliga Regionalista, different republican tendencies, carlists, etc.; with the sole exception of the radical republicans of Alejandro Lerroux and the dynastic parties), to the point of obtaining a

tremendous success in the vast majority of Catalan electoral districts in 1907.<sup>22</sup> Such a defeat for the dynastic parties would mark a decisive turning point in Catalan politics, since between 1907 and 1923 the above mentioned parties—even if not presented under the platform of Solidaritat Catalana— would overcome the dynastic parties in the total number deputies, an important anomaly within the Spanish context.

In the specific case of Igualada, the candidature of Solidaritat Catalana in 1907 was openly referred to as "Anti-godonista", since its main goal was to break the hegemony held by the Godó family in public offices in the two previous decades. The victory of Solidaritat Catalana in Igualada will be particularly relevant, since it will be the most important defeat of a Godó candidate. Joan Godó won the following elections in 1910, but what had been until then an undisputed monopoly of power by the family later faced much harder opposition.

Therefore, the political career of the Godó's as representatives of the Liberal Party should allow us to study what is in my view a fundamental issue in Restoration Spain: the loss of prestige of the dynastic parties in Catalonia; and what is more interesting, to explore what were the strategies and capacity of the dynastic elites to adapt to the new political situation. For instance, how the political victory of Solidaritat Catalana in both Igualada and Barcelona condition Ramon Godó Lallana's (often depicted by contemporaries as a severe enemy of Catalanist parties) and the political orientation of *La Vanguardia* will be, in conclusion, another important point of concern in our research.

**Pol Dalmau Palet**

Fiesole, February 2011

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<sup>22</sup> The crucial element behind this unitarian movement was the famous discussion around the "Ley de Jurisdicciones", in 1906. The following year, Solidaritat Catalana obtained the 67% of the total votes in Catalonia. In Barcelona, the all the candidates of this platform were elected: seven out of seven. For the case of Barcelona, see: RIQUEL, B. de (1972), Les eleccions de Solidaritat Catalana a Barcelona, in *Recerques*, nº 2, pp. 93-140.